United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General proposes appointment of Ambassador Ayala Lasso of Ecuador as High Commissioner for Human Rights, with effect from 28 February; also announces various senior appointments in Secretariat, and new Force Commander for UNPROFOR.

+ Addressing press conference at Headquarters, Secretary-General says he would support use of force in Bosnia and Herzegovina; outlines current situation in Somalia, Cyprus and Western Sahara, among other issues.

+ Comprehensive new recommendations for national and global statistics for System of National Accounts issued jointly today by United Nations and four other international organizations.

+ Secretary-General of Fourth World Conference on Women calls for creation of human rights unit within Division on Advancement of Women, to link work of Centre for Human Rights and Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has announced that he proposes to appoint José Ayala Lasso, Ecuador's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, as High Commissioner for Human Rights, for a term of four years, beginning 28 February. The appointment, which can be extended by a further four years, is subject to General Assembly approval.

The Assembly decided last December to create the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights, following a recommendation emerging from the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna last June. The Commissioner was to be "a person of high moral standing and personal integrity", with expertise in the field of human rights, and with the general knowledge and understanding of diverse cultures necessary for impartial, effective performance of the duties involved.

The Secretary-General also announced a number of appointments in the top echelon of the Secretariat. These include the appointment of Ambassador Hans

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Corell of Sweden as Legal Counsel. He will be taking over from Carl-August Fleischhauer, who has been appointed a Judge of the International Court of Justice in the Hague.

Ambassador Lansana Kouyate of Guinea is being appointed Assistant Secretary-General in the Department of Political Affairs, under Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding. James Jonah, who has also been serving as Under-Secretary-General in the Department, is leaving the Organization and his post will be discontinued.

Mr. Boutros-Ghali also announced that he had decided to appoint General Guillaume de Sauville de Lapresle as Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force, replacing General Jean Cot.

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Addressing a press conference at Headquarters today, the Secretary-General expressed himself in favour of the use force in Bosnia and Herzegovina, saying it would give credibility to the Security Council resolutions to that effect. He said too that he personally favoured the use of air support to achieve the Council's goals with respect to Tuzla and Srebrenica. He had delegated the authority to decide on such use to his Special Representative, Yasushi Akashi, and that move had drawn a positive response from all the Security Council members. On the other hand, the use of air power for pre-emptive or punitive purposes still required further authorization from the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

With respect to Somalia, he said plans were being made for the future functioning of the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) based on the expectation that troop strength would not exceed 16,000 after March. Choices had to be tailored accordingly, and priority would be given to protection of non-governmental organizations and centres for distribution of humanitarian aid, and to help bring about reconciliation between the country's various factions.

On the question of Cyprus, the Secretary-General said he was optimistic about the future of negotiations. There had been a breakthrough, in the sense that there was now a political will on both sides to adopt the measures he had proposed to build the confidence between their communities.

On Western Sahara, Mr. Boutros-Ghali said the implementation of the planned referendum there would need the cooperation of the two protagonists, Morocco and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO). He would be informing the Security Council that disagreement still existed between the two sides and it would be up to the Council to decide whether to persist with the United Nations current efforts there.

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So that statistics can be used more effectively in national and global economic policy-making, comprehensive new recommendations for the System of

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Nations Accounts (SNA) were issued today in a joint publication by the United Nations, the European Union, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the World Bank. The System was prepared under the guidance of the United Nations Statistical Commission and was strongly endorsed by the Economic and Social Council last summer.

In addition to the intensive and unprecedented collaboration of the five sponsoring organizations, the System of National Accounts 1993 draws on the technical inputs and expertise of almost 200 experts worldwide in a variety of statistical and economic fields. Among the main features are its applicability to all countries, developed and developing, its flexibility and its harmonization with statistical concepts and standards elaborated by other international organizations. The 1993 SNA thus addresses more effectively major issues in the economic and social fields, among them sustainable development; transition from centrally-planned to market economies; poverty; inequalities in women's employment and remuneration; and informal production.

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A human rights unit should be created within the United Nations Division on the Advancement of Women, to link the work of the Centre for Human Rights and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, Gertrude Mongella, Secretary-General of the Fourth World Conference on Women told Committee members this morning.

Ms. Mongella was responding to concerns expressed by experts of the 23-member body, which monitors implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. They stated that inadequate resources had hampered their work and stressed that a link between the Centre for Human Rights and the Committee would help to mainstream women's issues in the human rights field. Ms. Mongella said that all institutions serving women, in the United Nations system as well as in government ministries, faced inadequate servicing. The Division was also underfunded, and she hoped that the World Conference would provide an opportunity to raise the question of the lack of resources for women's issues.

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